

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Talking Cock

Richard Herring

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About the Book

IT HAS MANY NAMES -

Knob, dick, schmuck, tool, John Thomas, the bald-headed mouse, the yoghurt spitting sausage, spam javelin, the sergeant with one blue stripe who loves to stand to attention, the pink lighthouse that wants to draw you onto its rocks, Jack the Dripper, Rumpel-foreskin, the crimson butterfly and, of course, Russell the fur-faced chicken.

IT INSPIRES LUST, FEAR, AWE AND LAUGHTER.

It is an object of shame and when engorged, indecency. It can be a pound of flesh or an ounce of winkles. It can create life and condemn us to death... And it can do wees as well!

HOW CAN ONE LITTLE FLAP OF SPONGE AND SINEW BE ALL THESE THINGS?

You will be surprised how little you know about the skin chimney, because although men may constantly brag and exaggerate about their little chap, they rarely talk about their feelings for it. At last Richard Herring, playwright and star of BBC2's *This Morning with Richard, Not Judy* takes the task in one hand to find the truth about men and the flute of love in the 21st century.

About the Author

Richard Herring was born in Pocklington in Yorkshire in 1967, but grew up in Cheddar in Somerset (that's right, where the cheese comes from, although actually it doesn't). He is best known for his collaboration with Stewart Lee in shows like BBC2's *Fist of Fun* and *This Morning With Richard Not Judy*.

He also wrote 37 episodes of the Al-Murray sit-com *Time Gentlemen Please* for Sky One (in which he also occasionally played a sarcastic, bean-faced postman).

The original theatrical version of *Talking Cock* was written in 2002 and Richard has performed it all over the UK and at the Melbourne Comedy Festival in Australia. It has already been translated into 14 European languages for productions featuring indigenous actors. In Belgium for example, it is called 'De Penis Praat'.

For those of you for whom this information is not sufficient, you can find out more about Richard Herring at his website www.richardherring.com, which includes an intrusive daily diary about his boring life.

Talking Cock

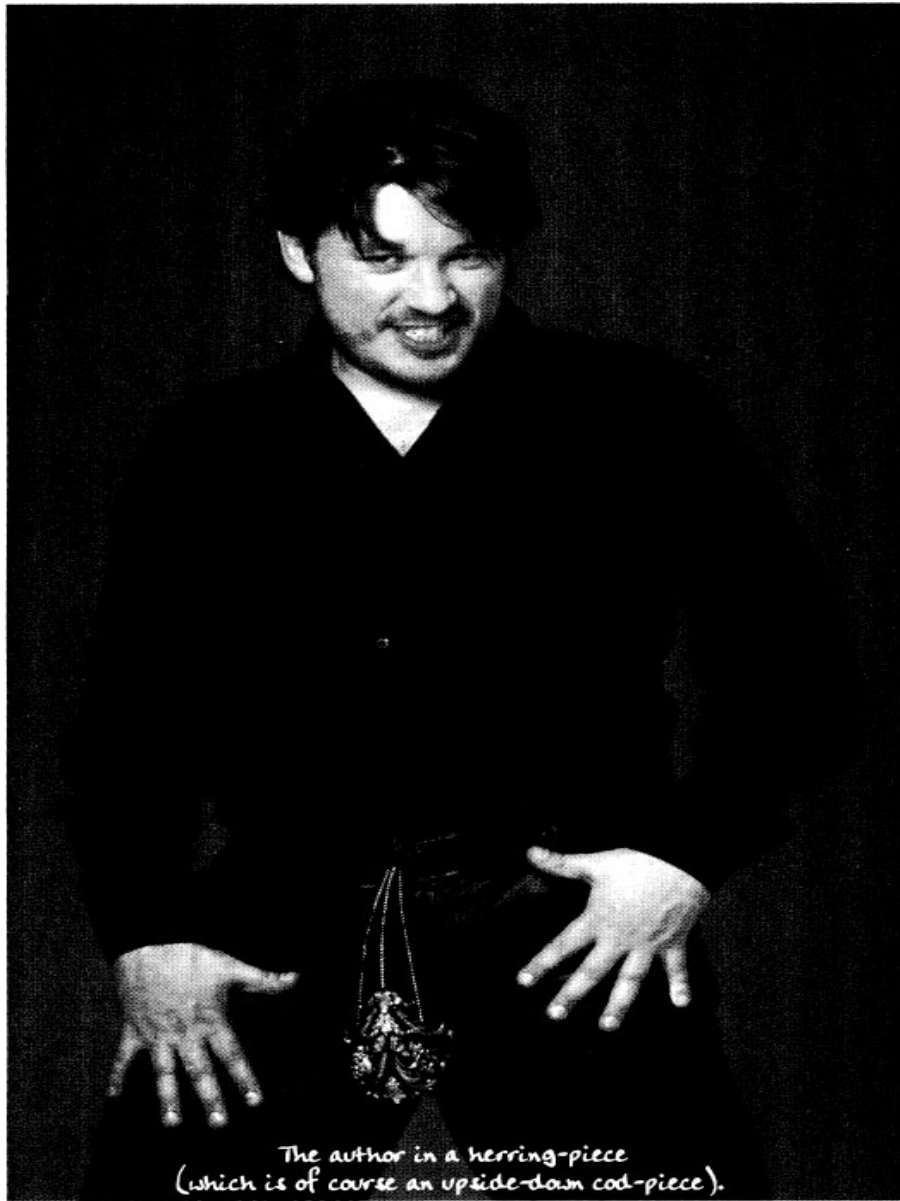
A Celebration of Man and his Manhood

Richard Herring



EBURY
PRESS

*For Stephanie and Paddy.
Remember, not all dicks are attached to dicks.*



*The author in a herring-piece
(which is of course an upside-down cod-piece).*

PRECOCK

I was sitting in a public toilet the other day.

On the door of the cubicle in front of me was some graffiti. In six-inch-high letters, someone had written the words,

Suck My Cock!

What a pathetic, stupid, childish, ignorant thing to write.

There's no name, no phone number, no address. Nothing. How was I meant to get in touch with him? What a waste of my valuable time. Three hours I waited in that cubicle. Not a dickie bird. Not a sausage.

It did remind me, however, of a better graffito that I noticed a few years previously, also in a public convenience. Someone had written on the wall,

I am twelve inches, do you want me?

Underneath which someone else had written,

THAT DEPENDS ON HOW BIG YOUR COCK IS!

The second person there had misunderstood the first writer, possibly deliberately, and was imagining that his correspondent was just a foot tall. A ridiculous misunderstanding. How could he have reached so high up the wall? Possibly he carried a small stepladder with him

everywhere he went. Though you'd have to ask yourself, 'How big a stepladder could a twelve-inch-high person actually carry and would it increase their reach to any more than two feet at the very most?' All things considered I would still say the 'foot-high-man hypothesis' was unlikely.

But, you know, in their own way, both the men who took the trouble to write 'Suck My Cock' and 'I am twelve inches, do you want me?' were both celebrating their masculinity. Letting the world (or rather, in this case, other men who needed to do a shit, or possibly a wee, if they were one of those blokes who is too shy to do it next to other men and has to go into the cubicle, or people who were wanking, or having sex with other men, or possibly, with courageous and shameless women), letting all those other cock-users and cock-suckers and cock-lovers know, that they too have a cock. A cock that they would be proud to have sucked, a cock that they are delighted to proclaim - and possibly exaggerate - the dimensions of. Providing it's on the wall of a toilet cubicle and no one knows who they are.

Because isn't that the problem with men? The only place we will really try to get to grips with our penis - maybe that's the wrong choice of words (I could do jokes like that all through this book, but I'm really going to try not to) - the only place we will express ourselves about our penis is anonymously. On the wall of a toilet.

The one place where all the functions of the penis are explored, and people also do shits as well.

Isn't it time for men to celebrate their porridge guns outside the murky confines of the water closet? Shouldn't we be getting them out in public, proud and unrestrained? Can't we rid ourselves of the shame and the sniggering, the smear campaigns and the stigma (and the smegma), and honour this little thing that, at its best, gives us all so much pleasure.

COCKQUOTE

**'The comedian from hell always thinks he can entertain us,
With everything we didn't want to know about his penis.'**

*from 'Everything You Didn't Want to Know About My Penis' by
Momus*

This book aims to do just that.

Ironically, of course, most of you will choose to keep it next to your lavatory.



Who says size isn't important?

INTRODUCTION

SO, LET'S JUST make one thing very clear from the start,

I am not obsessed with cocks.

I know that I have written a book called *Talking Cock*, which takes cocks as its principal subject, and within which I clearly display my vast and detailed knowledge of cocks, cock history, cock anatomy and other cock-related issues, and wherein I have already, at this early stage, equalled the world record for 'the book containing the most uses of the word "cock"' (there, beaten it! *I'm a record-breaker!* Take that, *The Macmillan Encyclopaedia of Domestic Fowl*), but I am not obsessed with cocks.

I know that writers are often advised 'write what you know', but that wasn't what happened here. I didn't think, 'Hmmmm, I'd really like to write a book, but what on earth could it be about? Well, I suppose I should write from experience. In which case, it'll have to be about cocks. Men's big cocks.'

That didn't happen, because I am not obsessed with cocks.

I know that I said that thing in the preface about waiting in the toilet for the 'Suck My Cock' man, but that was just a joke. It didn't really happen. Honestly. I have never sucked a cock, nor have I had any serious desire to ever do so. The idea of me having some kind of manhood mania, fuckstick fixation or penile preoccupation is palpable poppycock . . . I mean, palpable poppyrot.

I AM NOT OBSESSED WITH COCKS.

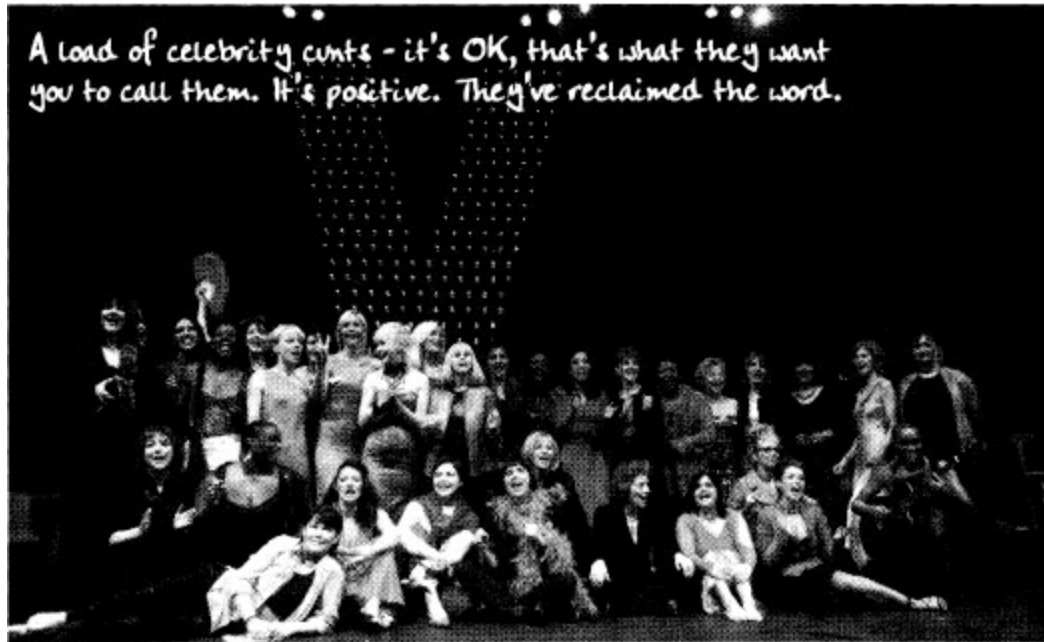
So you are probably asking yourself, 'How did such an avowedly, self-proclaimed non-cock obsessed man come to

write a book exclusively about cocks (the very antithesis of his interest), when his masculinity and heterosexuality are clearly beyond any kind of doubt and men's big, erect cocks obviously hold no allure for him whatsoever?'

And I would say to you, 'What an excellent question. I couldn't have put it better myself.'

My Knob Odyssey began in October 2001. I was performing my one-man show, *Christ on a Bike*, at the Arts Theatre in London's West End. I was sharing the stage with the worldwide smash *The Vagina Monologues* (or as the comedian Jenny Eclair more amusingly calls it, 'Twat Chat'). The Vag girls were on first and I would sit in my dressing room each night listening to the show on the theatre intercom. You can't imagine what a delight it was for me to hear the 360-capacity audience laughing themselves stupid and shouting out 'Cunt!' in unison, when asked to do so by Miriam Margolyes. It was made especially pleasurable for me, because I knew I was about to go on to perform to the 20 people who had bothered to turn up to see me, who occasionally also shouted out 'Cunt!', but in less orchestrated circumstances and rarely in unison.

After I had finished my show, I would usually head to the bar where sometimes ten per cent of my audience were waiting to greet me. Practically every night, one (or both) of them would buy me a beer and say, 'That was quite good. Shame there weren't a few more in.'



I'd say, 'Well, you know, the whole September 11th thing has affected West End audiences really badly.'

They'd remark, 'That's weird, 'cos there were thousands of people coming out of *The Vagina Monologues*.'

I'd correct them, maybe a little abruptly, 'There weren't thousands, there were 360. There are only 360 seats in the theatre. And of course they're going to get loads of people in if they put *vagina* in the title. I'd have 360 people in my audience if I called my show "Vagina on a Bike", or "Tits on a Pogo-stick" but I wouldn't do that. I've got some artistic integrity.'

I was trying to get them to back off, but many of them failed to pick up on the subtlety of my hint, and would blather on, saying, 'Hey! Have you ever thought about doing a male version of *The Vagina Monologues*? You could call it *The Penis Monologues* or maybe *Cock Tales*!!'

I'd laugh a bit too much, slightly too close to their faces, and then sarcastically slur, 'No, I've never thought about doing that. What an amazingly original and unpredictable idea. Oh, if only I could be as clever and inventive as you.'

Then, in case they hadn't understood that I was being sarcastic I would add, 'I am being sarcastic.'

That usually cleared up any confusion over the sarcasm issue.

'Why don't you just call me a cretin to my face?' I would continue. 'Of course I've thought about doing that. I thought about it the exact second I first heard about *The Vagina Monologues* and then immediately discounted it as the most pathetic and hackneyed idea that has ever been imagined. Men don't need a show about penises and they don't want a show about penises. Any male answer to *The Vagina Monologues* would be stupidly macho and competitive and misogynist. So there's no way I'm going to do it, all right? Now get out of my sight, you idiots, you make me sick.'

Then as the people were leaving I'd shout, 'Thanks for the beer. Do tell your friends about my show.'

For some reason, they chose not to.

After three weeks of drunkenly antagonising the few people who liked me, I began to wonder if I was making a mistake. I have to admit that, despite my artistic integrity, I had started imagining what it would be like to perform to a packed audience and not lose hundreds of pounds a night. I imagined that it would feel really nice and that instead of shouting at people who were trying to be civil to me, I'd probably say something like, 'Oh you are a sweetie, thanks for being there for me! Do tell your friends' . . . and this time they would. Allowing me to spend the money I made on luxury items for my home.

However, more important than that was the realisation that the Vag show had been going for six or seven years and despite the obvious obviousness of doing a cock version as well as the commercial potential of such an enterprise, no one had ever actually done it.

Why was that?

It struck me that it was probably because *The Vagina Monologues* is about celebration and no one could argue

that the penis was worth celebrating. The best thing anyone could say about the penis was that it was funny. Which is why, while women were rejoicing in and venerating their vaginas at the Arts Theatre, on a stage not far away some Australians were twisting their genitals into the shape of hamburgers in the show *Puppetry of the Penis*. There was clearly a disparity here.

Surely there was more to the penis than its ability to do a vague and distasteful impression of the Eiffel Tower, but if there was I was having trouble thinking what it might be. If not portrayed as a comic appendage, the penis was seen as a dangerous weapon. As a man I was so used to the concept that 'all men are potential rapists' that I would scarcely think to challenge the idea. Similarly I took it as read that on the rare occasions when women did actually consent to sex that men were selfish and incompetent lovers.

Were these stereotypes fair? If not, why did men seem to accept them without question? Was the penis really only a battering ram or a jester's pole? Wasn't there more to it than that? Wasn't it time for the twisting to stop and the schlong celebration to begin? Wasn't it time for a Vagina Monologues with balls?

I decided to give it a go. I booked a slot at the Edinburgh Fringe the following year and got to work. There was no turning back.

Immediately I wanted to turn back.



COCKQUOTE

'A man who is ashamed to show or name the penis is wrong. Instead of being anxious to hide it, a man ought to display it . . . With honour.'

Leonardo Da Vinci

I shall be calling him as a witness in my forthcoming trial

It had struck me why no one had done this before. The success of *The Vagina Monologues* was due to the fact that it got women talking about their genitalia in a way that they never really had before. In an early article in *Scotland on Sunday* about my project, Barbara Littlewood, a lecturer in sociology at Glasgow University, questioned the necessity of a cock show, saying that before *The Vagina Monologues*, 'the vagina was . . . a source of shame and embarrassment. The show broke a firm taboo'.

Dammit, she was right.

Men didn't need any similar encouragement to talk about their penises. Men constantly talk about their penises. They won't shut up about them. Not only was my show redundant, no one was going to pay to see what they could witness for free on any street corner (or toilet wall) in the world. And let's face it, it's hardly a fresh comedic subject. Most male comedians have at least 20 minutes on the subject. Some talk about practically nothing else (both on and off stage).

Then I asked myself, 'What do men actually say about their love rockets?' and I had to conclude that, despite men's constant prick schtick, we actually say very, very little. And of that very, very little, only a minute proportion of our comments are in any way serious.

Ninety-nine per cent of the conversations involved men bragging about how massive theirs is:

'I make King Dong look like Wee Willie Winkie.'

Or how tiny everyone else's is:

'He's got a cock like an anorexic anchovy . . . in size and also smell.'

Or possibly somewhat fanciful renditions of sexual scenarios:

'So there I was watching the football, with a beer in my hand and her on her knees, in front of me, when blow me . . . and she did . . . her twin sister walks in and decides to join in.'

(Doubtless some of that story is true. I believe it up to, and possibly including, the bit about the beer.)

Can you imagine a man discussing the subject seriously?

'Fellas, can we all just stop singing rugby songs for a moment. I want to talk to you about my ongoing struggle with erectile dysfunction.'

It would make him a laughing stock. Moreover, it would make him a laughing stock, who obviously had a tiny cock.

The more I thought about it the more I realised that men only discuss their placenta pokers in humorous tones (for example by referring to them as placenta pokers), because, just like pre-*Twat Chat* women, they are embarrassed and ashamed of the inadequacies of their genitalia. We're embarrassed and ashamed, aren't we, fellas? We're embarrassed and ashamed and we're ashamed and embarrassed to admit it, even to ourselves. We can't admit that we feel anxious about the size or shape of our genitalia, worried about our sexual performance or concerned that we might not be able to get an erection. Because being a man is all about having a cock the size of a baby's arm, which can get erect at the drop of a hat. When I was a teenager, that wasn't a problem. If someone dropped a hat - BANG - I'd be erect, instantaneously. Sometimes just a hat on its own would be enough, perhaps precariously perched on the edge of a table. It could drop any second. The anticipation was half the fun. Occasionally hats didn't even have to be involved. That's how easy it was. Now I'm 36 and I need hundreds of hats. Each more depraved and disgusting than the last.[1](#)

If I was honest I knew there were several cock-related worries that I had secretly harboured my entire adult life. Things I had never discussed, ironically, for fear of looking like a knob. If you read on, I might even tell you what they were!

Barbara Littlewood was wrong. Men *did* need this project. As long as it wasn't too worthy. As long as it was funny, so

they could still laugh along and confirm their masculinity. If I got it right they would be laughing and thinking, 'Thank Christ, I'm not alone!'²

So, would it be a show exclusively for men? To begin with I thought so.

It was very important to me that *Talking Cock* would not merely be a parody of *The Vagina Monologues*. Although I would never deny that the *Minge Whinge* was the inspiration for my idea, I wanted to avoid falling into the trap of trying to compete. I didn't want to try to claim that these days men are more oppressed than women (it's clearly not true) or to claim that the penis is better than vagina. Mainly because, if I'm honest with you, I *prefer* the vagina. I think it's great. I would go as far as to say that the vagina is my all-time, third favourite bodily orifice.

Top three, girls. Not bad. Keep trying.

I had assumed, however, that because *Muff Guff* was written from a female perspective, then my show should be constructed from exclusively male voices.

What changed my mind was actually going to SEE *The Vagina Monologues*.

I took a lady friend with me, on a first date. I have to warn you, guys, that this was a mistake. As we sat, reading the programme, waiting for the show to start, I was struck with a weird feeling of unease and isolation. I looked around the audience. *I was the only man there!*

Surely that was impossible. The place was pretty full. I checked again. The row behind me, all women. In front, all women. I peered over the balcony and was hit by the shrill sound of female voices. Wait! Four rows in front of me, a couple snogging. Thank God! No! Dammit! Both women!

Hold on, what do I mean 'Dammit!?' It's two women snogging. All my dreams have come true. But, no, in these panicked circumstances there was no time for eroticism.³ At this moment, all I wanted was to see another man, to hold

him in my arms and realise that I wasn't alone. And there he was. Seat N23. Another sweating, fidgeting man. I caught his glance, saw the terror in his eyes. We were both clearly thinking, 'Women, women everywhere. We'd better have a drink.' But as we rose to go to the bar, the lights went down and the show began. We had missed our chance. We were trapped. It was Room 101 and our lives would never be the same again.

OK, it wasn't quite that bad and the piece was pretty funny in places, though it was clearly funnier for women. They were all shrieking like that one old lady who is always in the studio audience of *Are You Being Served?* and who thinks that the word 'Pussy' is the most outrageous thing she's ever heard. Very much like that, thinking about it. Except this time there was no doubt that the women on stage were referring solely to their sexual organs. And they call that progress.

As the evening progressed I was wondering when to make my move with my date. But every time I tried to put my arm around her, or hold her hand, there seemed to be a declaration on stage about how evil and predatory men are. I was feeling guilty and paranoid, like I personally had done something to embarrass myself. Usually I have to wait until the morning after the date before that happens.

The show seemed to treat the vagina in isolation and gave the impression that vaginal penetration was a bad thing. No wonder no blokes were there. You only spend 40 quid at the theatre in the belief that looking classy will guarantee you some action. The rude title of the piece could only add to those beliefs. But this show would only make your girlfriend hot in the head, which is the last place you want heat on a date. The only positive story about a male in the production is about a man who likes looking at his girlfriend's vagina. For hours on end.

Pervert!

There was nothing about men and women putting their genitals together for mutual pleasure. Joking aside, I thought this was a bit weird.

The fact is that genitals do not exist to be treated in isolation. Genitals are made for sharing. Like Quality Street chocolates. Especially as I always seem to end up with the unpleasant-tasting green ones.

At the end of the show, my date turned to me and said that she had decided to become a lesbian. That was a first. Normally women have to sleep with me before making that lifestyle choice. I searched around the auditorium for the one other bloke, but when I found him he had crudely hacked off his own penis in shame and was calling himself Rebecca.

Surely there had to be a better, less divisive way.

I decided that *Talking Cock* should be aimed at men *and* women. Highlighting the positive, as well as the ridiculous and disgusting. Because the penis is of significance to everyone . . . except for lesbians and nuns. But that's OK, because lesbians and nuns are of particular significance to the penis (especially lesbian nuns, funnily enough). The important point is that even lesbian nuns wouldn't be here, if it wasn't for a penis.⁴

We all owe our existence, in part, to a penis and most of us get some kind of enjoyment out of it, if only in dildo form. *Talking Cock* would try to use the penis to bring us together, not as a wedge to drive us apart.

Not unless that's what you're both into.

So with my audience demographic neatly set out as everyone, I had to decide what questions needed to be answered. Here were some that struck me immediately.

-
- **Is size important? And if not, why are there no two-inch, pencil-thin vibrators?**

- **Do men think with their dicks? Do we truly have two brains in our body and only enough blood to operate one at a time? Or do we, in fact, have no brain and an excess of blood, just looking for something to do?**
 - **How can men cope when getting harder is getting harder? When we're 18, we're probably pointing at the ceiling. By the time we're in our mid-30s, after a little effort and a few dropped hats, we're pointing at the picture of our gran on the mantelpiece . . . Or so some of my friends have told me.**
 - **Are all men really lazy, arrogant, sexually self-serving, responsibility-shirking, promiscuous adolescents? Or are some of us actually not all that lazy?**
-

As a comedian (who is also a man) I was interested to find out why John Wayne Bobbitt being dismembered and having his penis thrown out of a car window is universally regarded as a *humorous* event? By men as well as women:

- **Did you hear that Lorena Bobbitt is going into weather forecasting? She's predicting four to six inches on the ground by morning . . .**
 - **MAN: What's this? (*He tosses imaginary object between his hands.*) John Wayne Bobbitt playing with himself.**
 - **Apparently Lorena Bobbitt is now dating a golfer? It's nothing serious. She's just working on her slice.**
-

Ha ha ha. How amusing. If a man did anything remotely similar to a woman, (whatever she had done to *deserve* it)

he would quite rightly be condemned as evil. If a woman had disfigured a man's face by, say, cutting off his nose, it would be seen as an atrocity. So why is it funny when a penis is attacked?

Why don't men complain?

Despite my early reservations it seemed there were many valid reasons to continue.

My next stumbling block was how I was going to get men to discuss their retractable doughnut holders. My original plan was to follow (or as some might term it, copy) the example of Eve Ensler (author of *Muff Guff*) and interview men face-to-face. Unfortunately, I could envisage getting a lot of responses of the King Dong variety. As a man it also filled me with dread having to discuss these issues with other men.

Would men even want to discuss the subject? Or have anything to say?

Men may be accused of thinking with their dicks, but they rarely think *about* them. Because to many men even thinking about your own penis is unmasculine or 'gay'. (Note my exuberant and slightly suspicious defence of my sexuality at the beginning of this introduction.)

One way round this, I thought, might be to set up an Internet questionnaire. I didn't really expect to gather all that much material from such a study. I thought it might provide me with a few good gags, maybe some statistics. I had no idea if anyone would even take part. In fact, I nearly didn't bother. And there were occasions, reading some of the responses, that I wished I hadn't.

However, in May 2002, I set up a website www.talkingcock.co.uk (which can also be located at www.richardherring.com/talkingcock/) with two anonymous questionnaires all about the spam javelin (one for men, one for women).

Of course there was a definite danger that people wouldn't take my quest seriously. So I prefaced the questions with a plea:

YOU ARE ABOUT TO TAKE THE TALKING COCK QUESTIONNAIRE

Although it may be tempting to put in 'hilarious' joke answers to these questions I would really appreciate it if you would refrain from doing so. My intention with this show is to finally give an honest response to what men (and women) think about penises.

I actually think that despite the importance of his penis to every man, men rarely talk about it (or even think about it) honestly. Believe me I can imagine all the amusing answers you could put to these questions, and yes, they are great, so I'd be really pleased not to see any of them here.

Don't be afraid to be serious. Although this is a comedy show outwardly, I want it to have a serious intent. So think before you answer. Consider. Surprise yourself.

I am not intending to mock anyone. I will use the information you give me sensitively (unless the way you tell your stories is clearly with a sense of humour).

If there are any questions you do not wish to (or can't) answer, then please leave them. Any answers I use will be completely anonymous.

I then sat down and wrote down every possible question I could think of. Some of them were statistical:



PENIS LENGTH - ERECT (IN INCHES)?

Some were designed to find out how much the penis meant to its owner:



WOULD YOU RATHER LOSE YOUR PENIS OR ONE OF YOUR LEGS?

Some concentrated on positive feelings:



DO YOU LOVE YOUR PENIS?

Others were more concerned with the negative:



HAS THE SIZE OR SHAPE OF YOUR PENIS EVER CAUSED YOU ANXIETY OR EMBARRASSMENT?

Some were deeply personal:



HOW MANY TIMES A WEEK DO YOU MASTURBATE?

Others were sexually graphic:



HAVE YOU EVER PUT ANYTHING DOWN THE END OF YOUR PENIS?

Some were based on my own personal experience:



DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE URINATING IN THE COMPANY OF OTHER MEN?

Others were more philosophical:



HOW DO YOU FEEL AS A MAN?

And some were just silly:



IF YOUR PENIS COULD SPEAK, WHAT WOULD IT SAY IN TWO WORDS?⁵

To be honest, I don't know why I asked some of the questions, but those were the ones with the most surprising results. For example, I asked men:



HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO SUCK YOUR OWN COCK?

Yes: 3,120 (70.86%) **No:** 1,283 (29.14%) **Total:** 4,403

Amazingly, over 70 per cent admitted that they had! It's so close to being 69 per cent which would have been so much more ironic, when you think about it.

I then asked:



COULD YOU DO IT?

Yes: 772 (19.16%) **No:** 3,258 (80.84%) **Total:** 4,030⁶

Almost one in five men say they have managed it. Those fellas never go out. Finally I wondered:



DID YOU SPIT OR SWALLOW?

Spit: 666 (40.46%) **Swallow:** 980 (59.54%) **Total:** 1,646

It's around about 50/50 on the spit or swallow your own semen issue.

I think that's saying something if you're not prepared to swallow your *own* semen. It's a bit much expecting someone else to do it for you. I don't understand what your problem is, you spitting fellas. You've already sucked your own cock! But to swallow your own semen, oh no, that would be *strange*, wouldn't it?

It should be noted here that although only 772 men confessed to being able to suck their own penis, 1,646 men answered the question about whether they spat or swallowed their own semen. I don't know what question the additional 874 men thought they were answering. Possibly they were thinking that I was asking whether they would spit or swallow their own semen, if they got the chance. Possibly they were saying that they would spit or swallow another man's semen if they got the chance. I don't think the final percentage answer will be affected too much, but it maybe gives you some indication of how drunk some of my subjects may have been (both when filling in the questionnaire and when they tried to fellate themselves).

So I had the questionnaire up on the World Wide Web, but how could I let the world of cock-users know that it was out there?

I sent out an e-mail about the site to friends and fans and asked them to forward it to anyone who they thought might be interested (probably not their grans, unless they were open-minded enough to answer the question 'Do you enjoy anal sex?').

The site was immediately a massive hit. A thousand people responded within the first 24 hours. Less than a week later, I was a news story, making page five of *The Independent* newspaper, which falsely claimed the survey has 69 questions. (There are actually 68 for men and 26 for women - see how the press will lie to us if it makes a good story. Shame on you, Cahal Milmo. That can't be your real name, surely?)

The site was mentioned on many Internet news groups as well as in newspapers all over the world, which explains the sudden surge in responses from China a couple of months in. Although most of the responses have come from people in the UK, the countries of Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe are all well represented. Other countries with a few respondents include Brazil, Kuwait, Mexico, Pakistan, Egypt, Botswana, Singapore, Japan, Serbia, Croatia, Samoa, Jamaica, Trinidad and Macedonia. One man described himself as Polish/Irish/Cherokee. That's quite a combination. I won't give any of his answers here, as I'm guessing people might be able to work out who he is! Another man, when asked his nationality, replied, 'Not your business,' though he did then go on to tell me the length and girth of his penis and all about his erectile dysfunction. It's interesting what people consider to be other people's business!

Ages range from 11 to 89 with an average of around 30.

All sexualities have been represented, though unsurprisingly, not all that many lesbians have filled in a questionnaire about penises (but 22 have, God bless them, along with a further 370 women who define themselves as bi-sexual).

By the time of going to press (with the questionnaire having been on line for almost exactly a year), it has been completed by 5,214 men and 2,267 women.⁷ The survey is still running, so please do go and fill it in. I will be constantly refining the statistics and responses I use in my live show. The more, the merrier!

I have to say that I was astounded and delighted by this massive response, and the variety of backgrounds of the respondents. However, I am aware that it is still far from being a scientifically accurate survey.

First, people can of course lie. I can't be 100 per cent sure, but from reading the responses I would say that the vast majority of people have taken the questionnaire in the spirit it was intended and answered honestly (occasionally with devastating honesty). I am able to deactivate the occasional 'joke' responses (for example, I chose not to believe the man who said his erect penis was four miles long). Secondly, it is only open to people with access to computers, which is bound to skew the demographic. Thirdly, people have to choose to take part and certain types of people are going to be inclined or disinclined to do so. Finally, it is a subject which men notoriously exaggerate and lie about (to themselves as well as to others), which, as you'll see, may be the reason for the surprisingly high average for erect penis size!

For all these reasons we should not take the statistics as gospel.⁸ However, I do feel that they demonstrate definite trends and thus should not be discounted. The individual responses to questions are also fascinating, revealing and again, I would argue, brutally honest. It is reassuring to see the same answers occurring over and over again. It is partly for this reason that I have decided to make this a book which concentrates more on common experience, rather than on the extremities of the penile world that are commonly covered in sensational TV documentaries.